

COUNTY OF ZETLAND.

MAINLAND DISTRICT.

# REPORTS

BY

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

AND

SANITARY INSPECTOR.

---

YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER, 1923.

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T. & J. MANSON, *Shetland News Office*, Lerwick.



COUNTY OF ZETLAND.

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MAINLAND DISTRICT.

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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICE,  
BRENTHAM PLACE,  
LERWICK, *March, 1924.*

*To*

*The Scottish Board of Health,  
The County Council of Zetland, and  
The Mainland District Committee of same.*

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to submit the annual report for 1923  
in the form prescribed by the Scottish Board of Health.

Yours obediently,

JOHN CRAWFORD, M.D.,  
*Medical Officer of Health.*



# REPORT by the Medical Officer of Health for the year ending 31st December, 1923.

## *A, B, and C.*—General Remarks and Enquiries, and Offensive Trades.

Very little can be added to what was said last year. An outline of a Venereal Diseases Scheme was adopted, as will be described later, and in December a set of bye-laws under the Dairies Cowsheds and Milkshops Order came into operation. The great disappointment was the failure of the arrangements to acquire Hayfield House as a Sanatorium, and to take advantage of an opportunity which is apparently not likely to be repeated.

Thanks are again due to the Officer-in-charge at the Observatory for a table summarising the weather of the year.

The table shows that there was more rainfall, particularly in the later months, than in 1922, and less sunshine. An interesting addition is the wind observations, for in this department the County of Shetland is in Great Britain probably pre-eminent, though it may not be up to date in some other directions.

It will be found that on 18 days (of 24 hours) the wind blew with gale-force, while on 87 others it was specified as "strong." It would be interesting to have a corresponding group of observations taken for a Southern group of Islands, say the Scilly.

It must, however, be admitted that however uncomfortable cold and strong winds may be, little influence of them on the health can be detected. Wind and rain are in themselves not dangerous to properly clad and properly nourished folk: probably the reverse.

## OLNAFIRTH WHALING STATION.

The nuisance previously described still continues, and the Report on the subject by the M.O.H. and Sanitary Inspector still holds good.

# RAINFALL, SUNSHINE, TEMPERATURE AND WIND FOR 1923.

## RAINFALL IN INCHES.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Total rainfall for month .....	5.37	4.70	1.02	2.16	3.87	2.00	1.84	3.90	4.83	4.02	6.79	4.38
Maximum fall in one day .....	0.73	1.34	0.22	0.37	0.55	0.59	0.67	1.17	0.96	0.46	1.15	0.65
Maximum fall in one hour .....	0.17	0.17	0.07	0.25	0.11	0.10	0.14	0.28	0.17	0.14	0.16	0.16
Rainless days .....	1	5	13	10	7	10	15	9	5	2	2	5
Total number of rainless days in year, 84.	Total rainfall, 44.8 inches.											

## SUNSHINE IN HOURS.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Total sunshine for month .....	15.7	25.5	115.8	146.8	156.2	158.8	133.2	120.6	124.9	93.2	42.5	19.0
Maximum in one day .....	2.9	4.5	10.9	12.9	12.4	16.5	15.2	10.9	9.7	8.8	4.7	3.9
Sunless days .....	17	17	9	8	2	3	3	6	5	5	8	19
Percentage of possible sunshine	7	10	32	33	29	28	24	25	32	30	19	10
Total number of possible sunshine in year 102.	Percentage of possible sunshine for year, 23.25 per cent.											

## TEMPERATURE IN DEGREES FAHRENHEIT.

(Mean for month obtained from mean of daily maxima and daily minima).												
Mean temperature .....	36.6	38.0	38.3	38.6	42.2	47.2	49.0	51.5	48.1	45.0	38.3	36.6
Absolute maximum for month .....	49.0	47.1	49.5	49.4	52.7	57.8	62.3	60.5	60.2	53.8	51.0	48.3
Lowest maximum for month ...	36.0	36.0	39.5	39.9	41.8	46.2	50.5	50.6	49.0	44.0	36.1	29.4
Absolute minimum for month ...	45.8	41.0	41.4	41.1	43.0	47.0	53.6	50.7	48.1	46.5	45.6	45.4
Lowest minimum for month ...	25.5	30.3	32.2	28.9	26.8	32.2	42.8	41.1	35.8	32.5	26.3	21.7

## WIND IN MILES PER HOUR.

Number of hours of wind over 39 m. p. h. ....	99	113	31	11	2	1	0	21	27	31	22	68
Number of hours of wind 24-39 m. p. h. ....	254	319	96	212	173	191	53	82	139	195	152	225
Number of hours of wind under 24 m. p. h. ....	391	240	617	497	569	528	691	641	554	518	546	451
Max. hourly wind in m. p. h.	56	54	45	44	39	39	34	57	59	56	44	51
Direction of max. hourly wind ...	W/NW	WSW	S	N	W	N	W	WSW	WSW	WSW	N	W
Date of max. hourly wind ...	19th	8th	12th	26th	7th	11th	20th	22nd	9th	9th	18th	18th
Time of max. hourly wind ...	2100	1400	1000	1600	0300	0600	1200	0300	1500	1400	0800	1000
Speed of highest gust m. p. h.	85	69	60	56	51	54	45	81	82	78	73	80
Gale Force is 39 m. p. h. pr. over.	Strong winds 24 to 39 m. p. h.											
Time is reckoned from midnight as 0 to 24 hours.												



The Company proceeded to erect several additional digesters, and after some correspondence sent a plan showing the proposed extension for approval by the District Committee. This extension was approved, on a Report by the M.O.H., who visited the premises and found the digesters *in situ*. It seemed that the few extra digesters could not much influence the present nuisance, which is caused by the faulty condensation of noxious fumes, and it would seem to be wiser for the Committee to concentrate on this point. In the absence of any bye-laws, such as the Local Authority has power to make under the Public Health Act, the result will not be much in doubt.

## FISHING STATIONS.

The fishing season was a short one, but the conditions remain as previously described in the Report for 1920, and the remarks and recommendations then made may be repeated. Increased cubic space and proper ventilation of the huts, proper facilities for ablution, more convenient sanitary accommodation, and a better system of rubbish collection, are the main points to be aimed at. As regards the Bressay Stations, it is probable that the lack of proper water supply will always render these more or less unsatisfactory.

### **D.—Factories and Workshops.**

Nothing falls to be added to previous remarks on this subject; practically the only factories being bakehouses, generally well-conducted.

### **E and F.—Housing.**

The condition of the extra-burghal parts of Lerwick remains as before. It is understood that the question of Burgh extension is at length to be raised seriously.

A few insanitary premises in the vicinity of Lerwick were inspected along with the Sanitary Inspector, and due measures taken when required.

### **G.—Rivers Pollution.**

There is no problem of rivers pollution.

## *H and I.*—**Hospital Accommodation and Disinfection.**

The fever hospital remains much as before. Painting and repairs, pointing, etc., began to be conducted in the summer, but the much-needed cleaning and re-painting of the fever wards was only in progress when the present epidemic of scarlet fever from Lerwick Burgh set in. Repairs of a solid nature have been made to the wooden shed on the Knab known as the Smallpox Hospital and it is available for use in emergency.

The Disinfecter is in good order. The number of disinfections done was 31, of which the District Committee were responsible for 11 and the Burgh for 20, six of these latter being for the Gilbert Bain Hospital and four for the Hostel.

## *J and K.*—**Infectious Diseases.**

Nine cases were notified, of which two were of paratyphoid, three of acute pneumonia, two of erysipelas and two of scarlet fever. Both cases of paratyphoid were nursed at home and both proved fatal. One was from Boddam and one from Levenwick. No connection between the cases could be traced, but in the latter the water supply was open to infection. The scarlet fever cases were both practically in Lerwick and formed part of its epidemic. It is curious that no cases of the disease were notified from the crowded North Road area.

## *L.*—**Venereal Disease.**

In February things were placed on a definite basis, and on the 27th a circular was sent to all medical practitioners giving particulars as to how free examination of materials, free drugs, and free treatment might be obtained by any person. For the convenience of doctors a stock of drugs is maintained here which can be obtained on signed demand. A centre was established as arranged by the Board, and advertisements were inserted in both local papers repeatedly, calling attention to the fact that all information as to free treatment could be obtained at this office. There was only one applicant, probably because patients, knowing which doctors were responsible for the treatment, went to them direct. The Centre officially came to an end on August 31, as the Doctors considered the fee approved by the Board too little. The matter is still under the Board's consideration.

About 250 attendances were given at the Centre during its existence, and about 180 doses of salvarsan were given out, all,

with one exception, to the two doctors concerned with the Centre.

### **M. — Vital Statistics.**

The population of the District according to the Registrar-General was 15902. There were 241 deaths, giving a corrected rate of 15.2 per 1000. There were 208 births (of which 16 or 7.4 per cent. were illegitimate) giving a rate of 13.6. The infantile mortality rate (deaths under 1 per 1000 births) was 28.

Heart disease was the main cause of death with 33 cases, tuberculosis claimed 22, and malignant diseases 20. All respiratory disease claimed 15. Of the 241 deaths registered, about 21 per cent. were uncertified, the death in most cases being stated as due to old age.

### **N. — Tuberculosis.**

The figures show some alterations from last year, for while the deaths are fewer the notifications have increased. This, if maintained, would be most satisfactory.

Table 1, showing the distribution of cases between the three Local Authorities, with the rates for the Mainland District and Burgh. Access cannot be obtained to any transfers there may be for the North Isles :—

1923.	Mainland District.	North Isles.	Burgh.	Totals.
Notifications .....	49	7	44	100
Deaths (including transfer.)	23	5	6	34
Rate per 1000 .....	1.45	—	1.27	—

Of the total deaths 21 were of males and 13 of females, and 7 deaths were due to non-pulmonary causes.

Table 2, showing the distribution of cases in the County Registration districts. Transfers are included which have been referred to their proper areas.

Registration District.	Popula- tion 1923.	Total deaths T.B. 1923.	Deaths of notified persons.	Total notifica- tions 1923.
NORTH ISLES—				
Unst .....	1817	1	1	3
North Yell .....	1543	0	0	1
Mid and South Yell .....	590	4	3	3
LERWICK (Burgh) .....	4792	6	6	44
MAINLAND DISTRICT—				
Bressay .....	589	2	2	2
Burra .....	808	2	2	1
Delting .....	1136	1	0	0
Dunrossness .....	1234	3	2	2
Lerwick (Landward) ...	2136	0	0	10
Lunnasting .....	466	1	0	0
Northmavine .....	1635	1	0	2
Sandsting and Aithsting ...	1871	2	2	0
Sandwick and Cunningsburgh	1919	5	4	11
Skerries .....	127	0	0	1
Sandness .....	404	0	0	2
Tingwall .....	1185	3	2	3
Whalsay .....	855	0	0	6
Whiteness and Weisdale ...	581	2	1	4
Walls .....	674	1	1	3
Papa Stour .....	119	0	0	2
Totals.....		34	26	100
The totals for 1921 were .....		55	29	89
„ 1922 „		50	39	89

*Treatment.*—It seems little use to reiterate the arguments and statements of the last three years, as to the need of a Tuberculosis Institution in these islands, and the unsatisfactory present state of affairs. The conditions are well known to the Board and to the County Council; and the general public while terrified of the disease, takes little practical interest. All this is most disheartening to a Tuberculosis officer, especially when he is aware that a sum of £250 stood in the way of the acquisition of what probably would have been a very satisfactory building for transformation to a Sanatorium.

The present so-called Sanatorium goes on as before, but this year the inevitable occurred. Owing to a mild epidemic of scarlet fever in Lerwick it was found necessary to empty the Phthisis wards and three patients had to be sent home. Fortunately none of them were seriously ill. But could a dying patient have been moved?

There were in the Sanatorium wards at January 1, 7 patients. During the year 14 were admitted. The results are shown below :—

Died in Hospital .....	2
Died since .....	2
Discharged improved .....	14
Discharged unimproved .....	3
Remaining at December 31 .....	0

In Sanatorium in Scotland (Nornside) there remained at December 31, three patients.

To the Gilbert Bain Hospital, eight patients were admitted during the year (notified cases). Of these all were discharged improved, and none remained at December 31.

In accordance with the arrangements made with the various Nursing Associations the following visits were made to Tubercular patients :—

	Patients.	Visits.
Nurse McClelland, Bressay .....	4	107
Nurse Bath, Scalloway .....	3	144
Nurse Noble, Sandwick .....	11	149
Nurse Weir, Dunrossness .....	8	74
Nurse Roberts, Cunningsburgh .....	2	167
Nurse Bridges, Burra .....	13	490
—	—	—
	41	1131

The Tuberculosis officer made 120 visits to patients, mostly throughout the County. Sixty calls were made by patients at the office, for examination or advice, and thirty specimens of sputum were microscopically examined. The Tuberculosis Nurse for Lerwick and District in pursuance of her usual duties, paid about 300 visits to tubercular patients.

Again one must allude in the gravest terms to the question of treatment. Since the closure of the Phthisis wards many applications for beds have been made which could not be entertained. The patients were not suitable to send south: and indeed this means a responsibility which the Tuberculosis officer is unwilling to take. Surely this County Council is willing and strong enough to face this important subject, now dalled with for more than ten years.

## ***O and P.*—Child Welfare and Notification of Births.**

Nothing further can be added to remarks of previous years. Schemes of child welfare do not appear at present practicable, though much might be done in Scalloway and the Lerwick landward district. Notification of births, except in the latter, is not being practised.

The usual report forwarded to the Central Midwives Board, shows that there were 208 births and 3 deaths under 10 days of age.

## ***Q.*—Milk and Dairies.**

The actual conditions are unchanged. A set of Bye-laws under the Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Orders were confirmed by the Board, and came into operation in December. Registration will now be more carefully supervised and the improvement of premises, will, it is hoped, ensue through time. No new premises can be registered which do not comply with the Bye-laws.

## ***R.*—Food.**

The greater portion of meat used in the District comes through Lerwick, where careful inspection is ensured, and the slaughter-house is well conducted. The arrangements made for inspection at Scalloway and Sandwick have worked satisfactorily.

It seems desirable to give here details for the Lerwick slaughter-house, which have been obtained from the Burgh Sanitary Inspector.

During the year there were slaughtered—

551 cattle; 181 calves; 4716 sheep; 12 pigs.

For tuberculosis only part of one carcase and small parts of others (offals), amounting to 180 pounds, were condemned. No less than 365 livers or kidneys, amounting to 3285 lbs., were condemned for hydatid disease. This shows, as last year, that 66 per cent. of all cattle are infected with the parasite.

As regards sheep, 5 carcasses were condemned as dropsical or inflamed, and in no less than 4070 cases were parts (usually liver or lung) condemned for fluke or other parasite. These facts should be interesting from the veterinary point of view, though probably the risk to health is negligible.



## **U.—Tabular Statement.**

The tabular statements may be summed up as follows :—

### **(1) RETURN OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.**

There were 58 cases notified, of which 49 were tuberculosis. Of these 49, 17 were removed to Hospital. Of the 9 remaining notified (non-tubercular) cases, 2 were paratyphoid, 2 erysipelas, and 2 scarlet fever, only these last being removed to Hospital. There were at December 31, 109 persons in the District known to be suffering from Tuberculosis.

### **(2) INFANT MORTALITY.**

There were 232 births, of which 16 were illegitimate. There were 6 deaths of children under 1 year of age, three of these being illegitimate. As to the causes of death, 4 were from premature birth, etc., 1 meningitis, 1 bronchitis. Of the 6 deaths, 1 was uncertified, that of an illegitimate child.





COUNTY SANITARY OFFICE,  
LERWICK, March, 1924.

To

*The Scottish Board of Health,  
The County Council of Zetland, and  
The Local Authority of the Mainland District of the County.*

GENTLEMEN,

In terms of Section 15 of the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897, I beg to submit the following Report on the general Sanitary Conditions of the County for the year ended 31st December, 1923.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

WILLIAM ALEXR. WATT,  
*County Sanitary Inspector,  
Chief District Sanitary Inspector  
for the Mainland District.*

## *WATER SUPPLIES.*

The water supplies in the Special Districts were adequately maintained during the year, and sufficient for all requirements.

The herring season was of short duration, and consequently less water was used than in former years. The heaviest demand for water in the fishing time is made in the beginning of the week, as on Monday morning the drifters have their tanks and boilers filled, and most of the herring workers on the stations do their weekly washing of clothes and general clean up. This causes a temporary shortage or a diminished supply for the time being, but no serious inconvenience seems to ensue, as no complaints were lodged regarding the matter.

The diminution does not appear to be due to the want of water in the loch from which the supply is derived, but the extended supply to the Lerwick Housing Scheme, with the various sanitary fittings, all requiring more water than has hitherto been necessary, with the limited sanitary conveniences in the older parts of the burgh, probably accounts for it, more especially considering the fact, that although there is now a greater consumption of water, there has apparently been no extension of the water works to meet it.

During the summer season the water in the supply to Lerwick District and Burgh was found in some cases to contain a minute form of animal life, but apparently of a harmless nature, as no cases of illness which might have been attributed to this cause were reported.

Outside the Special Districts, the work of improving the wells amongst the crofting community was steadily carried on, with the result that 37 supplies were covered over as a protection against pollution, and 4 pumps were fitted up. In one case where intimation was lodged for protecting a well, parties interested converted the well into concrete reservoir, and laid down a gravitation supply in cast iron pipes to the dwelling houses.

Since the extension of the Scalloway water system, other two houses have during the year taken in water supplies, and with the exception of one, the other one was laid in by the owners without

statutory action being necessary. As there are, however, still a number of premises in the extension area where water has not been introduced, investigations will be made, and unless there are exceptional circumstances, notices will be served on parties responsible to have supplies laid on.

### *DRAINAGE.*

LERWICK (LANDWARD).—There is no change in the drainage conditions relative to this area from that mentioned in previous reports, and it does not appear that any improvement can be looked for in the meantime, nor for some considerable time to come, unless and until the boundary of the Burgh of Lerwick is extended to include this district.

The absence of abnormally warm weather during the summer months, and the effect of recurring showers of rain, mitigates to a large extent any nuisance which might otherwise arise from the sewage-polluted ground, and also lessens, to some extent, perhaps, the risks to the health of the community.

SCALLOWAY SPECIAL DISTRICT.—The drainage system is now in a much more satisfactory condition than it has been since the area was first formed, as the extended sewerage scheme affords facilities to a number of ratepayers who in past years were to some extent penalised by having to pay sewer and water rates and were denied the services for which they were assessed.

As in former years, attention was given to the disposal of waste water from the dwelling houses and other premises outside the Special Districts, and on the whole the prevention of nuisances arising from these sources has been fairly well looked after by occupiers responsible.

The situation regarding waste water drainage at Hamnavoe, Burra Isle, remains unchanged. The district was visited several times during the year, and apart from the drainage, disposal of mussel shells and other refuse (which along with the want of a proper sewage system caused considerable nuisance in previous years) has been looked after, and instead of being thrown about the doors and into surface channels, is now being taken to the sea front.

Fortunately no further cases of typhoid fever have been reported from this district during the year.

### *SCAVENGING.*

The scavenging of the two Special Districts, Lerwick (Land-

ward), and Scalloway, continues to be carried on as in former years, and calls for no special comment apart from what has been already suggested in previous reports with regard to improvements in the scavenging arrangements.

There is still a tendency in the Lerwick District for the fishing community to dispose of mussel shells, and other fish refuse on any available ground near the houses, instead of taking them to the recognised dumps at the docks; and so long as some of the fishermen believe that the scavenger should take away this class of refuse, although they have been told that such is not the case, there will always be intermittent nuisances arising from this source, more especially as it is a difficult matter to detect offenders. Otherwise the scavenging is well attended to by the man in charge of the work, considering the scattered nature of the district and that most of the refuse has to be removed with a barrow to the sea shore.

The removal of the refuse in Scalloway is still in the hands of the individual inhabitants of the district, who convey it to the sea front at the nearest available part. The Local Committee, so far, have not appointed a scavenger, the only scavenging done by them being the cleaning up of the foreshores when necessity arises. Taking the district all over, there is very little nuisance caused by indiscriminate disposal of refuse matter, and no complaints were received.

### NUISANCES.

Thirty complaints were lodged and dealt with during the year. These had reference to structural defects of various kinds, choked drains, removal of offensive matter, and dirty and verminous house, etc.

Under Section 19 of the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897, 144 intimations were served, while 14 notices were issued under Section 20.

A considerable number of abatements were effected, but as in former years, structural and other works for removal of nuisances have been left over till next year owing to lack of suitable weather, and in one or two cases to the scarcity of tradesmen.

The nuisances mostly dealt with and removed were the following :—

Water Supplies protected .....	37
Dwelling Houses re-constructed .....	1
,, with damp walls remedied and improved ...	4
Houses repaired and new floors of wood or concrete laid down	7
Windows of apartments removed or made to open .....	6

Plaster on walls of apartment repaired .....	1
Privies repaired, cleaned, etc. ....	22
Accumulations of offensive matter removed .....	6
Choked drains cleared out .....	4
Surface drainage channels cleared out .....	2
New drainage systems laid down or improved .....	6
Roof covering of house renewed .....	1
Privy midden converted to pail privy .....	1
Direct connection between dwelling house and byre dis- continued .....	1
Fowls removed from dwelling house .....	1

### GENERAL INSPECTIONS.

As in previous years, general inspections were made of dwelling-houses, (in connection with water supplies, drainage, ventilation, dampness, and other structural defects, disposal of refuse matter, underground rooms, and sanitary conditions of surroundings of premises) and also to factories (workshops, schools, dairies, cowsheds, and graveyards).

### SPECIAL INSPECTIONS OR INQUIRIES.

Inspections were carried out with regard to all complaints made, and to outbreaks of notifiable infectious diseases. The number of infectious cases visited totalled thirty-one, 28 of which were tubercular; 2 para-typhoid fevers, and 1 Scarlet Fever. A few cases were removed under the supervision of the hospital staff, but the majority of the T.B. patients were left at home. Supplies of disinfectants, and leaflets of instructions for using same were given out in all cases not removed to hospital.

### SLAUGHTER-HOUSES AND OFFENSIVE TRADES.

The number of licensed slaughter-houses in the district is the same as last year, i.e., 5.

Twenty-five inspections were carried out, and most of the premises were found in a fairly clean condition and structurally in good repair.

In one or two cases, however, an improvement could be effected, in the conduct of the business relating to the slaughtering of cattle, and in order to put the trade on a more satisfactory basis, the Local Authority should adopt Bye-Laws for this purpose.

Dr. Leighton, Medical Officer (Foods) Board of Health, visited the slaughter-houses in the early months of the year, and his observations on these were communicated to the Local Authority by the Board.

Both the Fish Offal manufacturing premises at Bressay were working during the year, but owing to the shortness of the fishing season, business was only carried on for about three months.

The factories are usually well conducted, kept clean and in good repair, and no complaints were made regarding offensive smells or other nuisances.

The Whaling Industry was again carried on at Olnafirth Station during the year, but none of the other stations were in operation.

On visiting the premises in the beginning of April, three extra steam digestors were found lying on the platform which had been brought round from Collafirth station. The Manager stated that the digestors were to be erected at the north end of existing buildings, and covered in by an extension of the premises where existing digestors were situated. As this was apparently meant to form an enlargement of the premises, and the Medical Officer being of the same opinion, the matter was reported to the Local Authority, who in turn wrote the Whaling Co., pointing out that under the Public Health Act, 1897, Sec. 32, Sub.-sec. (6) the sanction of the Local Authority would have to be obtained to the extension.

In reply the Company did not admit that an extension was contemplated, but that the digestors were to be substituted for an older type then in use at the station. Ultimately, however, the Company made application for an extension of 6 additional digestors, and submitted a plan and specification of the proposed enlargement. The Sanitary Report and observations on the plan suggested that the Company should *inter alia* provide a proper and efficient system of preventing or mitigating the offensive smells arising from the process of manufacture, as no serious attempt had been made to deal with offensive smells, to which the Company replied that as the digesting process was carried on under sealed covers, no nuisance was caused from this part of the business, but from some other department of the factory.

The fact remains, however, that granted no offensive smells are given off during the digesting process, the smells must arise in the after treatment of the whale products, so that the additional digestors will increase the quantity of material to be dealt with, and will give off a larger volume of offensive effluvia, for which no proper means exist (or have existed since the business was



originally established) to render inoderous as far as it is practicable to do so.

After legal opinion had been taken by the Local Authority, and a report by the Medical Officer in favour of the establishment had been considered, (the Sanitary Inspector was from home at the time) permission was granted for the extension without any conditions being attached with reference to the treatment of offensive smells, so that the position with regard to this question remains unchanged.

Altogether 434 inspections were carried out under Section 43 of the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897, and the number of food articles condemned amounted to 198.

The inspections were made up of 176 visits to slaughter-houses; 156 to butcher shops, and 92 to grocers' shops.

The following articles of food were seized and destroyed :—  
94 beef livers, 1 beef offal, 2 beef kidneys, 1 cow's head; 94 tins of preserved foods,—corned beef, beef and tongue, meat paste, pork and beans, fish soups, and fruits. All the condemned food was found in the slaughter-houses except the preserved articles, which were discovered in the grocers' shops visited, and no objections were offered to their destruction.

As in previous years, the chief cause of the condemnation in connection with the edible offals found was due to hydatids in no less than 90 beef livers out of the total seizures of livers, also 1 cow's offal and the kidney of another one being affected with this particular parasitic disease. This is practically the same number of seizures as were made for the same cause in the previous year, so that there is no decline of the causes which contribute to the propagation and dissemination of this disease.

During the year the Local Authority instructed the Medical Officer of Health, the Veterinary Inspector and the Sanitary Inspector, to draw up suggestions with a view to dealing with the matter, and the following recommendations were submitted :—

LERWICK, 14th August, 1923.

*The Mainland District Committee.*

GENTLEMEN,

### HYDATID DISEASE.

In accordance with instructions we have met and discussed the above question. We beg to make the following recommendations :—

(1) That the leaflet by Mr White drawing attention to the nature of the disease and its prevention be issued in the way appearing most suitable to the Committee, as generally as possible.

(2) That a store of worm-powder for dogs be kept at the Health Office for issue in such manner as the Committee shall determine, advertisement being made.

(3) That the Committee carefully consider whether the number of exceptions from dog-tax cannot be diminished, perhaps by half.

(4) That the Committee consider what means could be adopted to ensure the destruction of infected meat or offal, apart from that condemned at slaughter-houses, before it can be the cause of spreading the disease.

(5) That the present policy of protecting water-supplies by all available means be supported and extended by the Committee.

A copy of the leaflet, as revised by Mr White, is appended.

We remain,

Yours obediently,

M. WHITE,

*County Veterinary Surgeon.*

JOHN CRAWFORD,

*Medical Officer of Health.*

WILLIAM ALEXR. WATT,

*Sanitary Inspector.*

So far the matter rests at that, as no further steps have been taken to deal with the suggestions made, except that the protection of the water supplies are, as in previous years, being attended to. This last is only a precautionary measure to safeguard, as far as possible, the transmission of the disease to the human subject, and has of course nothing to do with the origin of the disease. It also



affords no safety to the farm stock (except probably when these are watered from a protected source during the time they are housed up in the winter) as the animals in the course of grazing on pasture land and drinking at any convenient burn or pool which harbours the eggs, are probably wholly infected from one or other, or both of the sources mentioned.

There were no seizures for tuberculosis during the year, and while it is gratifying to report this, it would be idle to assume that the disease is non-existent,

It may be reasonable to infer, however, that out of an approximate head of 160 cattle slaughtered (mostly all cows) at the four slaughter-houses from Lerwick to Sumburgh, including Scalloway, the disease so far as this part of the county is concerned is not very much in evidence, otherwise some signs of it would be shown in the animals slaughtered.

On the other hand, a considerable number of animals are exported yearly from this part of the County, as well as other districts, and it may have just so happened that the tubercular animals had by chance for this year at any rate, been shipped to the cattle markets in the south.

Considering the large number of cows slaughtered, it is remarkable that there is never any appearance of animals slaughtered on account of difficult or prolonged parturition, or of the diseases incidental to parturition—milk fever, retention of the placenta, and abortion.

These as a rule are frequently found in slaughter-houses situated in the vicinity of dairying communities, where in the event of animals affected to such an extent that slaughter is imperative, the animals can be quickly transported to a slaughter-house with a view to the carcase being saved for human food, if in a condition to be passed for such. In this district, however, the same facilities for transport are not available, so that if an animal does not recover it is probably disposed of by being buried. In general the slaughter-houses, butcher's shops, and grocers' shops were found to be fairly clean, and in a fair good state of repair, Lapses from the state of cleanliness occurred at intervals in connection with the slaughter-houses, and in connection with this the adoption of the Bye-Laws recommended by the Board of Health for the conduct, etc., of such businesses would put this matter on a more satisfactory basis.

With reference to the protection of butter and margarine in bulk, cheese, ham, and bacon, etc., from dust and flies, little further has been done by way of providing suitable means for this purpose. The matter was brought to the notice of shopkeepers in

the course of food inspection, and it is to be hoped that, if no powers are given to make proper precautions necessary in this respect, the community, enlightened as to the dangers of disease by dust falling, and flies who, prior to settling down on these perishable and unprotected foods, may have been walking over the contents of some privy, midden or some putrifying animal matter, may refuse to buy where such a state of things exist. Two merchants who carry on small businesses were warned about the dirty condition of their shops. In one case a piece of ham and another of bacon was found hanging among the cobwebs suspended from the roof of the shop.

Everything was laden with dust, the floor was littered with paper, and empty boxes, until it was almost impossible to get round the floor. The place was badly lighted and it was only by keeping the door open that the condition of things could be ascertained. Improvements were effected in both cases, but there is still considerable scope for further renovations. The mysterious thing about both places is the reason why such shops ever got any patronage, to keep them going; and unless people buying there had got so accustomed to the condition of affairs that they never thought there was anything amiss, or got long credits, or could buy goods cheap, there does not appear to be any other solution to the matter. The customers may, however, have been like Dr. Samuel Johnson, who said of his wife that he loved her well enough except for her particular reverence for cleanliness.

### *SCHOOLS.*

The condition of the schools continues to improve, and the Education Authority are fully in sympathy with doing their best to raise the standard of sanitation wherever improvements can be carried out in reason and with due regard to economy.

The drainage from Bressay School has now been completed, and the premises are now in a satisfactory state.

A new well has been sunk at Gott School, Tingwall, and a pump provided. The water appears to be abundant and of good quality.

The well at Girlsta School which was used in common with two crofters, has also been protected and covered in against pollution.

The outfall drains at Bigton and Quendale Schools have been extended so as to admit of the sewage being disposed of without causing a nuisance, and the work carried out appears to meet the the desired requirements. One school was disinfected on account of an outbreak of skin trouble.

## *WORKSHOPS.*

The greater number of workshops in the district are the her-yards, and these were all inspected during the fishing season. On the whole, they were found in a fairly good order, considering the state of some of them as mentioned in last year's report. Twenty notices were served for lime washings, and repairs to sanitary conveniences, removals of accumulation of rubbish, repairs to fish-workers' huts, etc., and two statutory notices were served for abatement of sewage discharging from the kitchens of two stations into the ditches at the side of the public road. Attention was given to these matters, except in the case of the latter two where it was found that in order to put the drainage right it would be necessary to open the ground on the stations. This could not be done owing to the ground being taken up with stock, but the alterations are to be carried out prior to next fishing season.

The water supplies at the Bressay stations have been under consideration with a view to an improvement. A report as to what might be done to this end was sent to Miss Mciklejohn, H.M. Sub-Inspector of Factories, Glasgow, who visited the stations during the season, and subsequently after a meeting with the Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector, met the curers interested, and there are hopes of something of a more satisfactory nature being done to safeguard the supplies, and if possible to try and augment them.

One notice was served for the erection of privy accommodation at a small station where there were only one male and six female employees; but as it was late in the season before the premises were inspected, and there was difficulty in getting tradesmen to put up the accommodation, temporary provision was made, pending erection of the privies next season. The occupier of workshops mentioned in last year's report has bought the premises he occupied, and has commenced structural alterations with a view to improving the workshops, and making them more up to date.

## *COMMON LODGING HOUSES.*

There are no common lodging houses in the County.

## *DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILKSHOPS.*

One hundred and twenty-six inspections were made to all the known premises where milk is sold to the public.

The sanitary conditons, with few exceptions, under which

the trades carried on are sufficiently well known without any further comment being made regarding same.

The Dairy Regulations framed by the Local Authority, and approved by the Board of Health during the year, came into operation on the 14th December, 1923.

In drawing up the draft bye-laws for the Local Authority, the Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Inspector gave special consideration to the local conditions under which the milk trade is carried on in this County, so as not to be unduly severe on cow-keepers, dairymen, etc., while at the same time providing for adequate protection to the public. From the opinions expressed by several of the milk dealers who have read the regulations, and who are probably least able to spend money to any great extent in the alteration of their premises to meet the requirements, it is satisfactory to note that these people see nothing in the regulations but what is right and proper with regard to the conduct of the business.

It will, however, be some little time before all premises conform to requirements, but a time limit will require to be agreed on so as not to indefinitely postpone the application of the regulations.

### *BURIAL GROUNDS.*

Six graveyards were inspected during the year, and the condition of these was pretty much the same as the others inspected last year, and commented on in the report for that period.

These conditions are not likely to be altered until new grounds become imperative.

### *BURIALS.*

The body of a seaman washed ashore on the island of Mousa was the only internment made under the Public Health Act.

There was nothing in his clothing to indicate his identity, but he had a full-rigged sailing ship tattooed on his breast, and similarly on his left arm an anchor, and the name of a German seaport underneath, so that the man had probably been a German. The body was interred in Sandwick Cemetery.

### *BYE-LAWS.*

The Local Authority gave permission for the erection of the following premises, after considering plans and specifications submitted for same, *i.e.*, Scullery for dwelling-house at Holmsgarth; shed at Holmside, North Roadside; shed at dwelling-house at

Parkfield Road; additions to two dwelling-houses at Burgess Street, North Roadside; shop and store at North Roadside, and fishcuring premises at Garthspool.

With the exception of the two dwelling-houses at Burgess Street, and North Roadside, the Medical Officer and Sanitary Inspectors' reports were favourable, but in the case of the dwelling-houses the following observations were submitted:—" We have " examined the plans and specifications submitted, and while we " are aware of the great necessity for additional housing facilities " in the Lerwick Special District, we are of opinion that it is not " desirable in the interests of Public Health that sanction should " be given to perpetuate the particular class of dwelling-houses in " existence in this area, by additions or otherwise, more especially " in the absence of proper sanitary conveniences and better selected " sites for housing accommodation."

In passing the plans, the Local Authority was of opinion that the time was not opportune for restricting the provision of housing accommodation; but it is to be regretted that the wider view of providing better housing accommodation was not considered.

The sanction given in these cases creates a precedent which in common fairness can scarcely be denied to others, with the result that as time goes on, and the number of inhabitants increase, the existing insanitary conditions will get worse. In view also of the possibility of the Lerwick boundary being extended to include this district, and with the prospect that the Burgh Council will be in a more favourable position than the present Local Authority to carry out any housing schemes, it would be a pity to allow extensions of this kind to go on which would in any way tend to stultify or hinder necessary improvements in this respect being carried out. If the boundary is not extended, the present Local Authority, by allowing such additions, will be in the same position.

### *PIG-STYS.*

Four pig-stys were inspected during the year, but no pigs were found on the premises. Structural defects in three of the pig-stys inspected require to be attended to, and copies of the Bye-Laws were sent to the occupiers.

As already mentioned in previous reports, however, pig rearing is a negligible business for commercial purposes in this County.

### *HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING.*

The number of houses inspected amounted to 134, and were



situated in the following districts :—Scatsness, Hillwell, Boddam, Levenwick, Hoswick, Sandwick, Cunningsburgh, Quarff, Tingwall, Scalloway, South Whiteness, Walls, Gruting, Dale of Walls, Sandness, Nesting, Voe, Eshaness, Ollaberry, Burra Isle, Bressay, and Whalsay.

On the whole the houses structurally and otherwise were in a fairly satisfactory state, and where nuisances were found to exist these were dealt with under the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897.

In the houses inspected 100 were roofed with tarred felt, 15 were slated, 16 thatched, and 3 roofed with corrugated iron. In all, four houses were vacated and closed, as owing to their dilapidated condition it was impossible to put them into order, short of re-building them. As in previous years, the thatched houses were found to be in the worst condition, and for reasons already referred to in past reports, the most difficult to deal with. The thatched roof house, however, is gradually being re-placed by the felt roof or the asbestos slated one, and for sanitary reasons this is all to the good; although the thatched roof has its advantages too.

Three new houses are in course of construction, two to take the place of old thatched houses, and one to re-place a felt-roofed house which was directly connected with a byre, and barn, and also in a damp situation. One house has also been re-constructed and is practically as good as a new house.

Progress continues to be made in the provision of sanitary conveniences, of which 69 have been fitted up during the year.

Systematic inspections were also carried out in the various dwelling-houses, including herring workers' huts, *re* cleanliness, and nothing was found to necessitate any action being taken.

A complaint was made regarding one old woman living alone in a dirty state, and a notice under Section 40 of the Public Health Act was served on her. Some relatives for a time looked after her, but as the old lady was difficult to get on with, they had to give it up, and shortly afterwards she was removed to the County Homes.

### GOVERNMENT HOUSING SUBSIDY.

Under the housing (Financial Assistance to Crofters) Scheme (Scotland) 1921, one dwelling-house was erected by a crofter in the North Mainland. The house was stone and lime built, roofed with slates, and consisted of living room, and two bedrooms, with scullery, larder, etc.

*NORTH ISLES DISTRICT.*

Owing to pressure of other duties in the Mainland District, it was impossible to visit the North Isles District.

The usual tabular statement has been forwarded to the Board of Health and the Local Authority.











